BILL: F2015 – SR9

Bylaws Amendment: Recommendation to the President

SPONSOR: Charles Rainey, First-Year Senator

DATE: January 28, 2016

Whereas the MLK Today event held in Mead Chapel on January 18th featured numerous highly offensive and post-racial actions (to name a few of a long list: a majority white oratory choir reading black experiences in the first-person, white students delivering quotes in a context that police POC's reactions to racism, songs repeated by the entire chapel suggesting POCs smile, and many more)

Whereas there has been an all-student email sent by President Patton celebrating the success of the MLK Today event, an event that has been perceived as a huge macroaggression for African-Americans on this campus

Whereas Justice Scalia's comments directly challenge black students' belonging at Middlebury College and their academic capabilities

Whereas black students ABSOLUTELY belong at Middlebury College, deserve to be at Middlebury, and earned their place on this campus

Whereas a conversation about the MLK event has occurred between the organizer, individuals involved in the event, and members of the Middlebury Community

Whereas Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia made comments during Fisher v. University of Texas suggesting black students belong at "less advanced"/ "slower track" schools and that elite institutions should have fewer black students.

Whereas the month-long silence from the administration after Supreme Court Justice Scalia's comments have facilitated a debate on campus concerning the academic capabilities of African-American students on our campus that should not even exist

Whereas the act of being very vocal about diversity and inclusion and even proposing a comprehensive plan to address relevant issues on Middlebury's campus are not the equivalent of a direct statement to African-American students

who may not feel valued by the administration because of the aforementioned passive silence

Whereas declaring to write a comprehensive piece of literature concerning the Fisher v. University of Texas Supreme Court Case sometime in the distant future is not the equivalent of a direct statement from President of Middlebury College directed to African-Americans, affirming our place at this campus

Whereas President Patton is committed to an everyday ethic of inclusivity

Whereas although Justice Scalia made these comments in December, and the MLK Today event was more than one week ago, it is much better to make a statement late than never at all

Whereas the longer the silence from SGA and the administration exists, the more damage we do to the already fragile relationship that exists between African-American students and SGA/ the administration

Whereas there has historically been a disconnect and a relatively poor relationship between SGA/the administration and students of color, especially black students, on this campus

Whereas a statement from President Patton denouncing the statements of US Supreme Court Justice Scalia and taking a definitive stance on the academic capabilities of African-Americans on campus would make this historically aggrieved group feel more included at Middlebury and ameliorate the current relationship between Black students and the administration as it currently stands

. . .

SGA officially recommends that President Laurie Patton send an all-school email addressing the MLK Day event and Justice Scalia's comments as soon as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Rainey
First-Year Senator